

# IN OUR BACKYARD



## AN UPDATE FROM THE ALBERTA SPECIAL WASTE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

### Expertise for Export

*"Throughout the Asia-Pacific region, there is an urgent need for expertise in hazardous waste management – and only three or four major players in the world can supply it. We happen to be one of them."*

– Ed Shaske

Chief Marketing Officer, ASWMC

Over twenty-five years ago, at the start of the cultural revolution, China's mighty Yangtze River was said to be as clear as crystal. Today, like most of the world's great waterways, it is endangered by pollution. As with most developing countries, the industrial development which has brought some welcome improvements in social conditions has also outpaced programs of environmental protection.

The People's Republic of China has a population of more than a billion people. Authorities are very aware of the dangers of environmental degradation, recognizing that, if it continues unchecked, it will have an adverse effect on future economic conditions.

This concern has led to a search for answers – and last summer, it prompted a call to the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation from the Chinese consulate in Toronto. The Chinese, it transpired, had heard of Alberta's successes in hazardous and special waste management and were calling for further information.

Rather than explain the program over the telephone, the Corporation invited the federal representatives to see Alberta's system at first hand and arranged a tour of the Special Waste Treatment Centre and other facilities.

### SOLUTIONS

The visitors quickly discovered that Alberta had solutions to many of the problems China faces in her growing industrial centres – the most pressing of which are being experienced in the city of Shenyang, in the northern province of Liaoning. Alberta's expertise, they felt, could be of help in establishing a system to control hazardous wastes in Shenyang. As a result of that visit, an Alberta delegation was organized to visit the region to assess the situation and offer solutions.



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Produced every two months by the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, "In Our Backyard" is intended to keep Albertans updated on issues and solutions in hazardous waste management. You can contribute to the process by "recycling" this newsletter. Pass it on to a friend with your comments. And, should you have suggestions you wish to share, pass them on to us. Our address, phone and fax number are on Page 4.



Alberta  
Special Waste  
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on recycled paper.

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## Expertise for Export

### CHALLENGE

*"We immediately realized the enormity of the challenge," says Ed Shaske.*

*Even though I have visited Hong Kong and Taiwan before, the sheer density of the population in China still comes as something of a shock.*

*Shenyang is a huge industrial centre with a population of between four and six million people yet, like most such centres in the Far East, its rapid development has outpaced environmental controls."*

The delegation, consisting of Environment Minister Ralph Klein, ASWMC Chairman Bob Clark, President Ken Simpson and Chief Marketing Officer Ed Shaske, was received with open arms by the Shenyang authorities. Expertise in waste management is limited in China and provincial governments are eager to learn the best way to establish regulations and procedures. In Shenyang, Minister Klein outlined Alberta's expertise and signed an agreement through which Alberta and the province of Liaoning will continue to work together towards economic solutions.

Bob Clark signed an agreement on behalf of the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation with Shenyang authorities which will involve working towards future commercial agreements.

*"The significance of these agreements cannot be overstated," emphasizes Ed Shaske. "They are the key to an enormous market in China."*

### OPPORTUNITIES

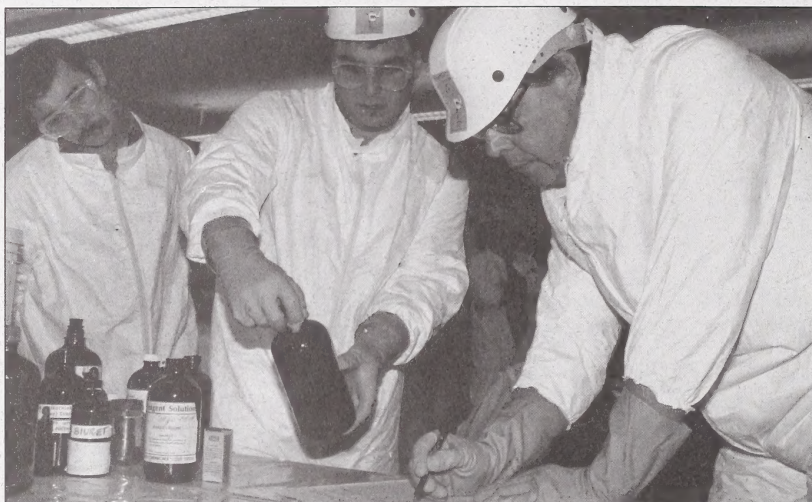
For Ed Shaske, the opportunities open to Alberta are virtually unlimited: *"Right now, there are up to twenty Chinese cities which require hazardous waste facilities. With the potential of funding from the World Bank, financing for these projects is virtually in place. At the same time, we have available not only a wealth of expertise in system planning and management – but access to a wide range of technical resources existing in Alberta."*

*Industrial development throughout south-east Asia is proceeding at an unprecedented pace," he points out, "and administrations are struggling to match this growth with environmentally sound waste management. It's an area in which Alberta is well equipped to help. By seizing these opportunities to export its expertise, the province can maintain its lead in technology, improve its economy, and help peoples overseas."*

There have, incidentally, already been promising results from the Trade Mission's visit to China. In March, two delegations from China will visit Alberta to discuss various proposals and see our System in action.

Other potential opportunities are developing in Indonesia, Australia and the Caribbean.

## School Toxic Round Up suits Minister just fine



*On January 23rd, the Honourable Ken Kowalski, Alberta's Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services (right), donned protective gear to join teachers and support personnel from Edmonton schools in preparing unwanted laboratory chemicals for safe transportation.*

*This session marked the conclusion of the four-month long School Toxic Round Up training program. Funded by a \$2 million allocation from the Alberta Lottery Fund, the program is designed to give key staff in Alberta's schools specialized skills in safe waste handling procedures.*

*"By participating in this program", said Mr. Kowalski, "Alberta's educators are showing the positive things that can be done to protect the environment."*

### THE FACTS

One way in which ASWMC is helping schools to prepare for the School Toxic Round Up is with its **Waste Minimization Fact Sheets**, intended to help schools initiate and maintain their waste reduction programs.

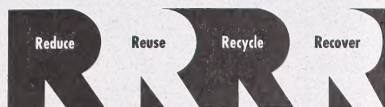
Suggesting simple ways to reduce waste at source and to minimize the production of special wastes, the Fact Sheets are intended for all school personnel involved with Automotives;

Beauty Culture; Custodial and Maintenance functions; Electronics; Fine Arts, Woodworking and Industrial Arts; Graphic Arts and Photography; Office and Administrative functions; and Welding and Machine Shop instruction.

The individual Fact Sheets complement the booklet, *"Guidelines for management of chemicals and hazardous waste in schools"*, which was distributed with the fact sheets to all Alberta schools last summer.



# Waste Minimization in Alberta Schools



*In recent issues of In Our Backyard we have examined the ways different Alberta industries are approaching the challenge of waste minimization.*

Alberta's schools are facing the same challenge – except that here, some of the most innovative responses are coming from the students. Perhaps never has there been a generation so aware of the dangers and consequences of environmental pollution – nor a group so determined to find a solution. From kindergarten up, youngsters are voicing their concerns and adults are beginning to listen, to respond, and to look for answers.

As we prepare this issue, students in over 1,300 Alberta schools are participating in programs which can earn their

schools the coveted Environmental Green School designation. It's a demanding commitment. To become an Environmental Green School, 100 student action projects must be logged. Despite the effort required from students and teachers, 1309 schools are registered in the program, 343 of which have achieved bronze status and 38 of which already have the Environmental Green designation.

At every level of the system, teachers and administrators are encouraging such student and community awareness. Waste minimization has become a priority not only with school staffs but with those who help prepare specialized programs and teaching materials.

Last year, ASWMC gave major impetus to these efforts by sponsoring *Waste Watchers*, a teaching module directed at youngsters from kindergarten level to Grade Two. Developed by FEESA (Friends of Environmental Education Society of Alberta) *Waste Watchers* is the first of several teaching aids planned by the Corporation.

## GENERATING AWARENESS

The Environmental Green School Award is the brainchild of the SEEDS Foundation, the Edmonton-based non-profit educational foundation which draws much of its support from Alberta's resource industries. For SEEDS (Society, Environment & Energy Development Studies), waste minimization is something that can best be learned through actual practice – in this case, as part of its *Learners in Action* program.

Intended to generate environmental awareness and suggest responses, *Learners in Action* consists of an awards program which involves students from Grades One to Six in environmental action projects as part of their daily curriculum. Through a variety of projects, students are encouraged either to enhance the environment or to communicate with others about the environment.

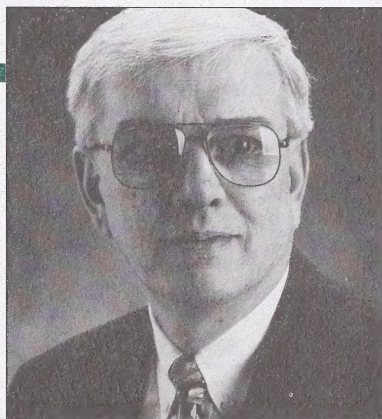
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## Profile

*- Ed Shaske  
Chief Marketing Officer, ASWMC*

Since the Corporation began actively promoting the export of Alberta's expertise in waste management, there's been a new face around the ASWMC office. Ed Shaske, our new Chief Marketing Officer, is a specialist in international trade, having served the province as Associate Alberta Trade Representative between 1985 and 1988.

In his position with the Office of the Alberta Trade Representative, Mr. Shaske was responsible for ensuring that the province's interests, objectives and priorities were fully understood and well represented in national and international trade negotiations. It's a job that called for a comprehensive knowledge of the rules of trade and an ability to recognize the implications of potential change – attributes which so characterize our new international marketing specialist that



we're thinking of printing them on his business card.

Prior to joining ASWMC in November 1991, Ed had acquired extensive international experience. An Economics major who graduated from the University of Alberta in 1966, he took post-graduate studies in business administration, and has since supplemented his studies with training at the Banff School of Advanced Management.

He entered the business world as an economist with the Genstar Group in Edmonton and in 1971, he joined the Alberta government as a specialist in economic development, serving as Director, Policy Analysis, and Executive Director of Travel Development.

He was appointed Executive Director of the Strategic Planning Branch of Alberta Economic Development in 1979, working in all areas of provincial economic policy analysis – including foreign investment, development priorities, futures planning, and international trade – until being seconded to the Office of the Alberta Trade Representative.

Mr. Shaske's initial challenge with the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation was the planning of ASWMC's major international trade mission to the Far East. The venture resulted in a number of important market development opportunities with which he will continue to be involved.



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## Alternatives

**Problem:** The average household contains three to ten gallons of materials that are hazardous to human health or the environment. The term 'hazardous' is applied to materials that are *corrosive, flammable, reactive* or *toxic*. Among these chemical concoctions are drain and oven cleaners, furniture polishes, paints and solvents – all of which should be stored carefully and disposed of properly.

**Solution:** Use homemade cleaners based on the six environmentally friendly ingredients: *vinegar, pure soap, baking soda, borax, washing soda, and ammonia*. As a substitute for oil-based paints, use water-based latex wherever possible and avoid aerosol sprays.

Product	Alternative
Tile/Kitchen Cleaner	Try this ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER for bathroom fixtures, floors, tiles and painted walls: 50 ml baking soda, 250 ml ammonia, 125 ml white vinegar, 4 L warm water. Rinse surfaces with clear water after washing.
Window Cleaner	Mix 1/4 cup (60 ml) vinegar with 1 cup (250 ml) of water. Label it (to protect your house plants!) and use in a pump spray bottle.
Scouring Powder	Nothing beats baking soda and a damp cloth. For stubborn stains, make a paste of baking soda and water and leave on for a few minutes.

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## Waste Minimization in Alberta Schools

Depending on grade level or school policy, students can maintain an environmental component in almost every subject area.

In mathematics, for instance, Grade Six students are encouraged to *recycle* scrap paper. Computer math games are suggested as a substitute for printed exercises. In Grade One, art class students can discover how to *re-use* old boxes, packaging or toilet roll holders in creative projects. Or a music class might compose an environmental message to the tune of a well-known song. One example that many adults might choose to follow is to *reduce* waste by creating garbage-free lunches.

Participating schools keep an environmental log book and work towards achieving either bronze, silver, gold, or green status – in pursuit of an Environmental Trophy awarded in each school. The trophy is passed from group to group, sometimes daily, as activities are logged. The aim is for every student to see his or her name in the log book many times as groups progress to the coveted Green designation.

For information on the *Learners in Action* program, contact Dan Stoker at the SEEDS Foundation: (403) 424-0971 or Fax (403) 424-2444.

## CALL DIRECT:

- ▲ For information on:
  - Hazardous Waste Management Programs in Alberta
  - Toxic Round-Ups
  - Community Study Groups
  - Used Oil Program**ALBERTA SPECIAL WASTE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION**  
1-800-272-8873  
422-5029 (Edmonton)  
428-9627 (Fax)
- ▲ For information on the transportation of dangerous goods:  
**ALBERTA PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES**  
1-800-272-9600  
(24 Hours)

- ▲ For a directory of waste management companies in Alberta:  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA**  
424-6384 (Edmonton)  
HOT LINE  
(for small businesses)  
1-800-661-WASTE (9278)
- ▲ For information on:
  - Recycling: Newspaper, Metals, Plastics, Clothing**RECYCLING BRANCH, ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT**  
427-5838 (Edmonton)  
297-5925 (Calgary)

- ▲ To report an environmental emergency or to register a complaint:  
**POLLUTION CONTROL DIVISION, ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT**  
1-800-222-6514
- ▲ To access the clearing house that puts potential users of waste materials in contact with waste producers:  
**ALBERTA WASTE MATERIALS EXCHANGE**  
450-5408 (Edmonton)

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